WRTG 3030: Science in the Public Sphere
Fall 2013

“As beneficial as some modern scientific discoveries have been, a case has been made by some that science does not provide us with ‘Truth,’ but with interpretations. If this is an accurate statement, then we should ask how it is that we choose one interpretation over another. The ethical implications are far-ranging.” (The Center for Science and Ethics)

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(this is the most reliable way to reach me!)

Course Description
Welcome! This course asks the questions: How is science communicated in the public sphere and how is it used rhetorically in discussions about environmental, social, economic, and political issues? We’ll focus on representations of science in news media, in artistic/cultural works, in public policy, and in industry. Because the ways we perceive and choose to interpret science significantly shapes our understanding of our world and how it works, the work of this course will better prepare you to be more savvy, more informed, and more intentional readers and writers so that you can engage in the important political, environmental, economic, and social challenges of our time.

Over the course of the semester, we’ll look at various texts to explore these questions:

- How is scientific knowledge rhetorically constructed/presented?
- In what ways is science a form of economic, political, material, and social power?
- Whose science counts?
- How do we navigate/interpret contradictory scientific accounts?

The course also emphasizes thinking, reading and writing critically—that is, thinking, reading and writing that does more than absorb the content of a text but also carefully studies the its structure and rhetoric, as well as the cultural values that shape it. We’ll examine the power of language as it functions in various genres with the goal of understanding how good writers make effective choices whether they’re writing a lab report, a blog entry, a resume, or—even a text message.
Because many of you will be using workplace genres (resumes, memos, reports, proposals) in your future careers, you’ll be practicing these genres throughout the semester. We’ll also consider how document design and visual rhetoric play a central role in effective communication, and you’ll be expected to use principles of effective design in your writing.

Course Goals
This course is guided by a set of goals developed by the PWR. These goals are divided into four categories:

Critical Thinking and Its Written Application
As writers and readers, students will:

• See writing as a form of personal engagement, demanding an awareness of the inherent power of language and its ability to bring about change.
• Pose and shape a question at issue.
• Locate and use resources when necessary for exploring a line of inquiry.
• Critically evaluate information sources for credibility, validity, timeliness, and relevance.
• Draw inferences from a body of evidence.
• Distinguish description from analysis and argument.
• Distinguish flawed from sound reasoning, and be able to respond to and challenge claims.
• Recognize a thesis, and understand the organic relationship between thesis and support in an essay.
• As writers, structure and develop points of argument in a coherent order to build a case; as readers, recognize this structure and development within texts.
• Critique one’s own works in progress and those of others.
• Recognize that academic and public writing is dialogic, addresses an audience, and anticipates the thinking, the questions, and the possible objections of readers.

The Writing Process
As writers, students will:

• Understand writing as an ongoing process that requires multiple drafts and various strategies for developing, revising and editing texts.
• Understand that revision is informed by critical dialogue.
• See the critical analysis of others’ work as relevant to one’s own writing.

Rhetorical Situation
Students will:

• Exercise rhetorical skills: frame issues, define and defend theses, invent and arrange appeals, answer counterarguments, and contextualize conclusions.
• Value writing as a collaborative dialogue between authors and audiences, critics, and colleagues.
• Make decisions about form, argumentation, and style based on the expectations of different audiences.
• Recognize that a voice or style appropriate to one discipline or rhetorical context might be less appropriate for another.
• Develop "topic"-specific language that is appropriate for the defined audience while also intelligible to a non-expert audience.
Mechanics and Style

Students will:

- Convey meaning through concise, precise, highly readable language.
- Apply the basics of grammar, sentence-structure, and other mechanics integral to analytical and persuasive writing.
- Develop skills in proofreading.
- Use voice, style, and diction appropriate to the discipline or rhetorical context.
- Use paragraph structure and transitional devices to aid the reader in following even a complex train of thought.

This set of goals expresses the PWR’s commitment to preparing you for the kinds of reading and writing you will perform in your other classes. They also fulfill the course criteria given to all state institutions by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the governmental body that contributes to the policies for college education in Colorado. In other words, this writing class is not just about what your writing teacher here at CU thinks is important. It’s about deepening your skills in rhetorical knowledge, writing processes, and language conventions so that you can write effectively for a variety of audiences in a variety of situations—both inside and outside the classroom.

Required Texts/Materials

- Reading assignments available in digital format (either through D2L or emailed from me). These reading assignments will introduce you to key course concepts and will also introduce thematic content relevant to the various assignments.
- WORD or WORD-compatible software for submitting major assignments digitally
- Notebook for homework responses and in-class writing
- Copies of your work and assigned readings when needed for class discussion
  Note: Please print double-sided when possible to reduce the amount of paper you use.
- CU email account that you check regularly

Major Assignments

- **Website Analysis:** In this assignment, you will rhetorically analyze a website related to the course theme of sustainability, especially focusing on how the rhetoric reveals/masks various political, social, and economic values. This assignment will prepare you to analyze rhetoric in your major.
- **Resume/Curriculum Vitae:** A resume or CV is an essential document for any professional. For this class, you will create or revise your resume or CV as a way of reflecting on your professional identity.
- **Professional Exploration Reports:** Over the course of the semester, you will write at least two short exploration reports in which you describe a campus or community group, resource, presentation, interview, or other event/experience that allows you to become more familiar with how rhetoric is used in your field.
- **Annotated Bibliography:** In preparation for your grant proposal or recommendation report, you will research the current conversation about an important issue in your field.
- **UROP Grant Proposal or Formal Recommendation Report and Presentation:** As the capstone project for the course, this assignment allows you to either prepare an Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program proposal or write a formal report about the issue you researched for your
Annotated Bibliography. Your proposal or report will also include an evaluative memo in which you reflect on your project and on your work for this semester. As part of this assignment, you will also be presenting your work to the class.

Grading
To complete this course successfully, you must attend class and scheduled conferences, complete assignments on time, and participate in class activities and discussions. For major essay assignments, you must turn in all drafts before I will grade the final version of your essay. If you have a question about your grade, please ask me about it. Please remember: even if you feel you have done poorly on an assignment, turn it in anyway! If you turn the assignment in, you will at least receive some points that count toward your final grade. Otherwise, you will not receive any points for the assignment.

Note: A word to the wise—keep copies of all of your assignments! Although I don’t often lose things, it can happen. If you have a copy, we’ll both be happier in the rare event that I misplace your paper.

Your grade for the course will be determined according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploration Reports (2, worth 25 points each)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Analysis (4 – 6 pages)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume/CV (1 – 3 pages)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography (10 – 12 pages)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UROP Proposal or Recommendation Report (10 – 12 pages)</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Evaluation Memo (3 – 4 pages)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q&amp;A Presentation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Writing/Class Participation (in-class &amp; other assigned writing, attendance, participation in class)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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A= 900-1000 points; B = 800-899 points; C = 700-799; D = 600-699

Attendance
If you miss more than three classes, you may be dropped from the course or fail the course. This may seem harsh, but the reasoning is simple—if you are absent more than three times, you have missed a significant amount of the course material and it will be difficult for you to achieve the goals of this course. Of course, there are always exceptions. If you have a valid reason for being absent for more than three class periods, contact me and we can discuss the situation; however, if you are absent, you cannot make up in-class work for the class period you missed. More than three absences will affect the class participation component of your grade.

If you are absent, contact a classmate for the information and assignments you missed.

Late Assignments
Late assignments are, well, late. Unless you have spoken with me beforehand to arrange for an extension, I will subtract a half letter grade from the total grade for each day the paper is late. I will not grant extensions just for any reason, but if you absolutely cannot meet the deadline because of something unavoidable, contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss the situation. Computer problems are not an acceptable excuse for a late assignment—with the variety of resources on campus, you should have ample opportunity to complete your work on time.
Writing Center
If you want additional help with your writing, the Writing Center in Norlin Library is a great place to go to talk about ideas, improve your thesis or essay organization, or just generally work on your writing skills. Check the Writing Center website for more information about hours and services, or request an appointment online at: http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html.

Revising Graded Assignments
At the end of the semester, if you would like to resubmit one of your major (graded) assignments, you may revise one assignment and turn in a Revision Portfolio for reevaluation. If you resubmit work you must:
- Choose one of the major assignments and revise your work. (You are welcome to schedule an appointment with me to discuss some strategies for revision.)
- Attach the original graded version and drafts of the assignment so that I can better evaluate your revisions.
- Write a one-page reflective statement describing your revisions.
- Submit your Revision Portfolio by the last day of class.

NOTE: You cannot revise assignments that were originally turned in late.

Disabilities*
If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Center for Community N200, and http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see the guidelines at http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/go.cgi?select=temporary.html.

Religious Observances*
Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, I ask that you contact me at least one week ahead of the date(s) that you will be absent so that we can discuss any assignments/class material that you will miss. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Classroom Behavior*
Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

Discrimination and Harassment*
The University of Colorado at Boulder Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures, the University
of Colorado Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures, and the University of Colorado Conflict of Interest in Cases of Amorous Relationships policy apply to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of sexual harassment or discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh.

**Honor Code***

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/.

*University of Colorado - Boulder recommended syllabus statement*

**Daily Schedule**

**Week 1: Introduction to the Course and Key Concepts**

Tues, Aug 27  
- Intro to the course and goals

Thurs, Aug 29  
DUE: read the syllabus and bring any questions you have to class; read “Welcome to the Age of Denial” and bring an annotated hardcopy to class to be turned in for credit (see the “Annotating a Homework Reading” assignment sheet); if you have a laptop, bring it to class for an in-class activity

- Review syllabus and course policies
- Reading discussion

**Week 2: Rhetoric and Websites – Representations of Science**

Mon, Sept 2  
DUE: email me with your two choices of a contemporary social issue related to the popular understanding of science to analyze for the first major assignment BY MIDNIGHT

Tues, Sept 3  
DUE: read “Rhetoric and Rhetorical Analysis” and bring your annotated hardcopy; read Website Analysis assignment and bring any questions to class

- Vote on topic for Website Analysis essay
- Discuss rhetorical framework for website analysis

Thurs, Sept 5  
DUE: Read the background and primary readings for the Website Analysis –
bring hardcopy of three discussion questions from the readings

- In-class practice with rhetorical analysis

**Week 3: Website Analysis**

**Mon, Sept 9**  
**DUE:** email the introductory paragraph of your Website Analysis essay to me by MIDNIGHT (cut and paste into email, no attachments, please)

**Tues, Sept 10**  
**DUE:** bring two printed copies of the full draft of your Website Analysis draft to class for peer review; read “Journalistic Balance as Global Warming Bias” and bring your annotated hardcopy

- Peer review workshop
- Reading discussion

**Wed, Sept 11**  
**DUE:** email your sentence revisions to me by MIDNIGHT (include the three original sentences and two revisions for each of the original sentences; cut and paste into email; no attachments, please)

**Thurs, Sept 12**  
**DUE:** Bring a hardcopy of your sentence revisions; read “Resumes” reading; read Resume assignment sheet and bring any questions to class

- Sentence revision workshop
- Introduction to resumes

_The rest of the schedule will be distributed by Sept 3._
WRTG 3030: Schedule, Weeks 4 - 16

Week 4: Resumes and Professional Writing – Basics of Document Design

Tues, Sept 17  
DUE: Website Analysis - Final Version loaded to D2L by 11 a.m.; send your file in WORD or WORD-compatible format
- Reflective writing on Website Analysis essay
- Introduction to document design
- Resumes, continued

Wed, Sept 18  
DUE: load your draft of your resume to D2L by MIDNIGHT (WORD, WORD-compatible, or .PDF format); PLEASE NOTE IF YOU DO NOT WANT YOUR RESUME USED FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

Thurs, Sept 19  
DUE: Bring two hardcopies of your resume draft to class for peer review
- Resume peer review

Fri, Sept 20  
DUE: email your revised resume to me by MIDNIGHT (WORD, WORD-compatible, or .PDF format)

Week 5: Resumes and Document Design, cont.

Tues, Sept 24  
DUE: bring 3 or 4 questions about your resume to your conference (to be held in ENVD 1B27D)
- conferences

Thurs, Sept 26  
DUE: bring 3 or 4 questions about your resume to your conference (to be held in ENVD 1B27D)
- conferences

Week 6: Communicating Science: Key Concepts

Tues, Oct 1  
DUE: read “Science Communication and Environmental Controversies” and bring an annotated hardcopy to class to be turned in for credit (see the “Annotating Readings” assignment sheet)
- Reading discussion

Thurs, Oct 3  
DUE: Resume - Final Version loaded to D2L by 11 a.m.; send your file in .pdf format
- Reflective writing on resumes
- Exploration Reports discussion
**Week 7: Project Intro**

**Tues, Oct 8**

DUE: bring a product or ad in which there is some reference to some kind of scientific evidence on the label or in the ad for the product/service

- Science as marketing - discussion
- Project intro / annotated bibliography discussion

**Thurs, Oct 10**

DUE: read “Memos”; bring a list of current issues/controversies in your field (or not) that you are interested in researching; bring a laptop if you have one or check one out from Norlin

- Resources for research (GREENR, etc.)
- Memos discussion

**Week 8: Scientific Controversy and Project Proposal**

**Tues, Oct 15**

DUE: read “Manufactured Scientific Controversy” and bring an annotated hardcopy to class to be turned in for credit (see the “Annotating Readings” assignment sheet)

- Reading discussion

**Thurs, Oct 17**

DUE: read “Proposals”; write a one to two-page memo that provides a brief proposal for your project focus: brief topic background, central question/issue, project purpose, potential project resources, project significance for you/your field (this proposal will not be graded but must be approved—pass/fail—for you to proceed with the project)

- Brief informal presentations
- Presentations discussion and sign up
Week 9: Project Research and Ethics and Rhetoric

Tues, Oct 22  DUE: reading TBA and annotations

- What’s next: reports and UROP discussion
- Rhetoric and ethics discussion

Thurs, Oct 24  DUE: --

- Guest speaker?
- Ethics and rhetoric, cont.

Week 10

Tues, Oct 29  DUE: read “Reports”

- Persuasive Writing: Recommendation Reports and UROP proposals

Thurs, Oct 31  DUE: Annotated Bibliography - Final Version loaded to D2L by 11 a.m.; send your file in WORD or WORD-compatible format

- Persuasive Writing: Recommendation Reports and UROP proposals, cont.
- Reflective writing on bibliographies

Week 11: Visual Rhetoric

Tues, Nov 5  DUE: read “Visual Rhetoric” and write a memo in which you summarize key concepts/questions for visual rhetoric; bring a striking visual that you find online or in print (if online, email me the URL before class)

- Visual rhetoric discussion

Thurs, Nov 7  DUE: Exploration Report #1 due to D2L by 11 a.m.; send your file in WORD or WORD-compatible format

- Visual Rhetoric, continued

Week 12

Tues, Nov 12  DUE: reading TBA and write a one-page memo in which you briefly analyze the rhetoric—textual and visual in the article

- Reading discussion

Thurs, Nov 14  DUE: --

- Presentations 1 – 5

Week 13: Conferences
Tues, Nov 19  DUE: bring your most current version of your report / proposal
• conferences (ENVD 1B27D)

Thurs, Nov 21  DUE: bring your most current version of your report / proposal
conferences (ENVD 1B27D)

Week 14: Fall/Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: Final Report/Proposals
Tues, Dec 3  DUE: ---
• Presentations 6 – 10

Thurs, Dec 5  DUE: bring two hardcopies of your report/ UROP proposal draft for peer review
• workshop drafts
• final evaluation discussion

Week 16: Presentations
Tues, Dec 10  DUE: Exploration Report #2 due to D2L by 11 a.m.; send your file in WORD or WORD-compatible format
• Presentations 11 – 15
• FCQs

Thurs, Dec 12  DUE: --
• Presentations 16 – 19

Fri, Dec 13  DUE: Final reports/proposals and project evaluation; submit hardcopy to my box in ENVD 1B60 by 3 p.m.

--Have a great winter break--